Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COTONO 00186 01 OF 02 042019Z

44
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 IGA-02 SS-15

SP-02 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 DODE-00 L-03 H-02 /079 W
---------- 050351
O R 041900Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8100
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COTONOU 0186

ABIDJAN ALSO FOR REDSO; NIAMEY ALSO FOR RDO; DEPT PASS
ALSO TO AID/AFR/CWR

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, PFOR, DM, US
SUBJ: BENIN'S FORNMIN REQUESTS RAPID USG ACTIONS RE AID
TO BENIN

REF A - STATE 23017, B - COTONOU 167, C - COTONOU 81,

SUMMARY: FORNMIN ALLADAYE SUMMONED ME AGAIN THIS MORNING
TO ASK ME WHEN TOP LEVEL AID OFFICIAL HE HAD REQUESTED
JAN 30 WOULD ARRIVE. I SAID I HAD CONVEYED HIS PROPOSAL
TO WASHINGTON. RESPONDING TO HIS REQUEST FOR INFO RE STATUS
OF COTONOU BRIDGE/DAM PROJECT, I CONFIRMED ACTIVITY RELATING TO
BRIDGE HAD BEEN SUSPENDED PENDING REVIEW. PROFESSING ASTONISHMENT,
HE PROTESTED THAT HE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN INFORMED AND HE
DEMANDED THAT I PUT WHAT I HAD SAID IN WRITING. I REFRESHED HIS
MEMORY AND TICKED OFF THE VARIOUS MEANS BY WHICH USG HAD
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PAGE 02 COTONO 00186 01 OF 02 042019Z

INFORMED HIS GOVT OF SUSPENSION, INCLUDING DEPTOFF'S CONVERSA-

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

TION WITH BENIN CHARGE JAN 14. IN CONNECTION WITH HIS QUES-
TIONS RE INCLUSING OF BENIN ON A SPECIAL "LIST" IN WASHINGTON,
I NOTED THAT, AS I HAD TOLD HIM SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE, USG IS
TAKING CAREFUL NOTE OF ALL ASPECTS OF TREATMENT OF UNITED
STATES BY BENIN AND SOME OTHER COUNTRIES. ALLADAY'S CONDUCT
SUGGESTS THAT HE IS UNDER EXTREME PRESSURE EITHER TO GET BRIDGE
PROJECT MOVING OR TO OBTAIN DEFINITIVE ASSESSMENT OF USG
POSITION. AT THIS JUNCTURE WE CANNOT EXCLUDE SOME RASH BENINESE
MEASURES AIMED AT USG. COUNTRY TEAM RECOMMENDS SEVERAL SPECIFIC
MEASURES DESIGNED TO DETER PRECIPITATE BENINESE ACTIONS.
END SUMMARY

1. BENIN FORNMIN ALLADAYE NOTIFIED ME TO GO "AT ONCE" TO SEE
HIM THIS MORNING. HE BEGAN BY ASKING ME, IN A RELATIVELY UN-
FRIENDLY TONE OF VOICE, WHEN THE AUTHORITATIVE AID OFFICIAL
HE HAD REQUESTED JAN 30 WOULD ARRIVE. I SAID I HAD CONVEYED HIS
REQUEST TO WASHINGTON AND HAD NOT YET RECEIVED A RESPONSE
(REF B). HE ASKED ME TO REINFORCE THE REQUEST.

2. HE INQUIRED WHAT PROGRESS I COULD REPORT ON USG ACTIONS
RE COTONOU BRIDGE/DAM. I SAID THAT, AS I HAD INDICATED TO HIM
PREVIOUSLY, USG HAD SUSPENDED FURTHER ACTIVITY ON PROJECT
PENDING REVIEW. ALLADAYE EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT. WHY HAD HIS
GOVT NOT BEEN INFORMED PREVIOUSLY? I POINTED OUT THAT, IN
ADDITION TO THE FACT I HAD INFORMED HIM MYSELF, DEPT HAD APP-
RISED BENIN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES JAN 14, DCM HAD TWICE DISCUSSED
MATTER AT LENGTH WITH FORNMIN'S DIR FOR EUROPE/NORTH AMERICA
(CAKPO) AND AIDOFF HAD REVIEWED IT REPEATEDLY WITH OFFICIALS
OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLAN ALLADYAE PROFESSED NO RECOLLECTION
OF MY PREVIOUS PRESENTATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT, AND HE OBSERVED
THAT HE HELD ME RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING HIM INFORMED. LOWER-
LEVEL DIALOGUE WITH BENINESE CIVIL SERVANTS WAS NOT SUFFIC-
IENT. TERMINATING AID (HE USED THE FRENCH TERM "COOPERATION")
WAS A SERIOUS MATTER, HE SAID, AND HE WOULD HAVE TO INFORM
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IMMEDIATELY. RE HIS REFERENCE TO TERMINATION
OF US "COOPERATION", I CORRECTED HIM -- THERE WAS A SUSPEN-
SION OF ACTIVITY RE BRIDGE/DAM PROJECT PENDING REVIEW BUT, AS
ANYONE COULD SEE, ALL OTHER AID PROGRAMS WERE STILL GOING
FORWARD.

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3. I RECALLED OUR DETAILED CONVERSATION OF JAN 30 (WHEN I
TOLD HIM USG NOT TAKING FURTHER ACTIONS RE BRIDGE/DAM PENDING
A REVIEW IN LIGHT OF AMERICAN LEGISLATION), AND MY OBSERVA-
TIONS ON THAT AND EARLIER OCCASIONS THAT USG WAS CAREFULLY
NOTING BENIN'S TREATMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING ITS
STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS VIS-A-VIS USG HERE AND IN INTERNATIONAL
FORA, COMMENTS IN BENIN MEDIA, PROGRESS RE INDEMNIFICATION FOR
US EXPROPRIATED INTERESTS, ETC. I REITERATED THAT USG TOOK

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

INTO ACCOUNT THE TOTALITY OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH A COUNTRY, AND ATTACKS OR MISREPRESENTATIONS IN PLACES LIKE NEW YORK OR ADDIS COULD NOT BE IGNORED. HE QUESTIONED ME AGAIN RE PRESS REPORTS OF "LIST" OF COUNTRIES (INCLUDING BENIN) BEING PLACED UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR REPRISALS. I SAID, THAT, AS I HAD TOLD HIM SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE, USG WAS TAKING CAREFUL NOTE OF BENIN'S STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS VIS-A-VIS THE UNITED STATES, AND IS CONCERNED RE TREATMENT FROM SOME OTHER COUNTRIES TOO (THIS COMMENT REFUTES BENINESE ALLEGATION THAT WE ARE SINGLING OUT POOR BENIN, WHICH IS ONLY TREATING USG LIKE SOME OTHER COUNTRIES ARE TREATING US).

4. ALLADAYE ASKED FOR A DIP NOTE SAYING THAT BENIN WAS ON A "LIST" OF COUNTRIES AND THAT USG WORK ON BRIDGE"DAM WAS SUSPENDED. I REPLIED THAT I DID NOT BELIEVE SUCH A NOTE WAS NECESSARY. ALLADAYE, BUILDINGUP A HEAD OF STEAM, REPEATED THAT HE WANTED A NOTE SO HIS GOVT, WHICH HAD A RIGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE SUSPENSION, WOULD HAVE OFFICIAL KNOWLEDGE. HE DECLARED DEPT OFFICER'S VERBAL STATEMENTS TO BENIN CHARGE AND MY STATEMENTS TO HIM (ALLADAYE) WERE INADEQUATE. I SAID I WOULD REPORT TO WASHINGTON HIS REQUEST FOR A NOTE AND AWAIT INSTRUCTIONS.

5. ALLADAYE STATED HE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A REPORT TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON THIS SUBJECT VERY SOON. I REMARKED THAT I JOPED IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ACTIVITY ON BRIDGE/DAM WAS ONLY SUSPENDED PENDING THE OUTCOME OF THE REVIEW, THAT OUR OTHER AID PROGRAMS WERE STILL GOING FORWARD, AND THAT I WAS STILL CONVINCED THAT "COOPERATION" BETWEEN USA AND SOCIALIST BENIN WAS PRACTICABLE PROVIDED THERE WAS TWO-WAY FRIENDSHIP. IT DID NOT DEPEND SOLELY ON THE GENEROSITY AND MORAL SENTIMENTS OF THE USA. "COOPERATION" WORKED BOTH WAYS; IT WAS DEPENDENT ON MUTAL FRIENDSHIP, MUSTUAL CONFIDENCE AND CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 COTONO 00186 01 OF 02 042019Z

MUTUAL RESPECT.
ENGLE

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PAGE 01 COTONO 00186 02 OF 02 041957Z

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

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SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 DODE-00 L-03 H-02 /079 W
---------- 049971
O R 041900Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8101
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 COTONOU 0186

ABIDJAN ALSO FOR REDSO; NIAMEY ALSDFOR RDO; DEPT PASS
ALSO TO AID/AFR/CWR

6. COMMENT. ALLADAYE'S TACTIC OF PRETENDING NOT TO BE
AWARE OF USG POINTS OF VIEW OR DEVELOPMENTS WHICH I HAVE
PRESENTED TO HIM ON EARLIER OCCASIONS IS ONE HE
USES FREQUENTLY WITH ME, AS DO OTHER MINISTERS. IT LOOKS
TO COUNTRY TEAM AS IF HE MAY BE UNDER EXTREME PRESSURE
EITHER TO GET THE PROJECT MOVING OR TO OBTAIN A
DEFINITIVE STATEMENT OF THE USG'S POSITION ON AID.
WE ALSO CANNOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT BENIN GOVERN-
MENT WOULD INCORPORATE ANY NOTE WE MIGHT GIVE THEM INTO A
PROPAGANDA ATTACK ON THE THEME THAT USG IS BLACKMAILING
THEM.

7. COUNTRY TEAM BELIEVES THAT SOME INTERIM USG ACTIONS SHOULD
BE TAKEN NOW, WHILE WE ENDEAVOR TO PERSUADE BENIN GOVERN-
MENT TO DEAL WITH US ON A FRIENDLIER BASIS. WE COULD, FOR
EXAMPLE, BE RESPONSIVE TO ALLADAYE'S TWO SPECIFIC DEMANDS:
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PAGE 02 COTONO 00186 02 OF 02 041957Z

BRING IN A SENIOR A.I.D. OFFICIAL TO TALK WITH HIM, AND
SEND HIM A NOTE. RDO/NIAMEY, AL BARRON, WOULD PROBABLY
BE APPROPRIATE A.I.D. OFFICIAL. HE COULD MAKE ROUGHLY
SAME PRESENTATION OF U.S. POSITION AS I HAVE MADE, PLUS
CARRY OUT ANY FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS. (WE UNDERSTAND
BARRON IS TRAVELING TO U.S. IN MID-FEBRUARY.MUHE MIGHT
BE ABLE TO STOP HERE EN ROUTE.)

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

8. PURPOSE OF REQUESTED NOTE IS PROBABLY TO HAVE IT AS TALKING PAPER FOR COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING AND/OR POSSIBLY HAVE IT IN RESERVE FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES. IF THE SUBSTANTIVE CONTENTS OF NOTE ARE LIMITED TO A FEW SENTENCES, RISK COULD BE CONTAINED. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MIGHT SAY: "THE EMBASSY, ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT HIS MINISTRY BE GIVEN A WRITTEN STATEMENT, WISHES TO INFORM THE MINISTRY OF THE FOLLOWING: PENDING THE COMPLETION OF A REVIEW, ACTIVITY ON THE COTONOU BRIDGE/DAM HAS BEEN SUSPENDED."

9. WE COULD ALSO WITHOUT GREAT EXPENSE LET THE FUNDING OF SANDERS AND THOMAS SUPERVISORY ENGINEERING CONTRACT FOR THE AFDB PORTION OF PROJECT GO FORWARD AS A RESPONSE TO BENIN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO GET STARTED WITH INDEMNI-FICATION NEGOTIATIONS. SHOULD USG MAKE THIS DECISION, WE WOULD INFORM BENIN GOVERNMENT THAT REVIEW IS GOING ON AND WE TAKING CAREFUL NOTE OF PROGRESS ON INDEMNIFICATION AS WELL AS BENIN GOVERNMENT'S TREATMENT OF UNITED STATES.

10. BY FOLLOWING SUCH A COURSE WE WOULD ALSO SAVE OUR FELLOW DONOR, THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, CONSIDERABLE TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES AS WELL AS EXPENSE TO BANK THAT WILL RESULT IF SUPERVISORY ENGINEERING IS NTW QUICKLY PROVIDED FOR THE DAM THEY ARE FUNDING (CONSTRUCTION OF DAM HAS ALREADY COMMENCED). PERMITTING THIS RELATIVELY MODEST EXPENDITURE WOULD ILLUSTRATE OUR GOOD FAITH WHILE RETAINING THE OPTION FOR USG TO GO AHEAD LATER WIT THE A.I.D.-FINANCED BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION BASED ON FUTURE ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION. AMENDMENT NO. 2 TO THE SANDERS AND THOMAS CONTRACT PR
PIDES MECHANISM FOR CARRYING OUT
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PAGE 03 COTONO 00186 02 OF 02 041957Z

THIS RECOMMENDATION. WE URGE THAT DEPARTMENT/AID TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO ALLOW REDSO TO APPROVE THIS AMENDMENT AND COMMENCE FUNDING UNDER IT.

11. BELIEVE THIS IS EXCELLEMW MOMENT FOR DEPARTMENT TO HAVE FRANK TALK WITH NEW BENIN AMBASSADOR TO UNITED STATES, THOMAS BOYA, RE BENIN-USG RELATIONS. THE PREVIOUS BENINESE AMBASSADOR (ADJIBADE) WAS ABLE TO AVOID MOST OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES BY STAYING AWAY FROM DEPARTMENT, AND THUS GOT OFF SCOT FREE. FOREIGN MINISTRY HERE GIVES IMPRESSION THAT, SINCE SERIOUS PROBLEMS ARE NOT BROUGHT BEFORE BENIN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, THERE MUST NOT BE ANY. ENGAGING BOYA WOULD REDUCE BENIN GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO PRETEND THAT USG IS NOT KEEPING IT INFORMED,

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

AND ADD CREDIBILITY TO THIS EMBASSY'S EFFORTS TO GET
BILATERAL RELATIONS BACK ON MORE SATISFACTORY BASIS. IT
MIGHT ALSO HAVE MODERATING INFLUENCE ON BOYA'S PERFORMANCE
AT UNITED NATIONS IF HE BECOMES AWARE THAT HE WILL HAVE TO
FACE AMERICAN OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON FROM TIME TO TIME.
A MARXIST "AGITPROP" TYPE, HE PROBABLY HAS MORE INFLUENCE
WITH KEREKOU AND OTHER EXTREMISTS WHO RUN THIS GOVERN-
MENT THAN DOES THE SOMEWHAT DISCREDITED ALLADAYE. WE
WOULD URGE DEPARTMENT NOT TO BE SATISFIED IF BOYA
SHOULD RESPOND THAT HE HAS TO BE IN NEW YORK AND WILL
SEND IN HIS "CHARGE D'AFFAIRES."

12. DECISION TO APPLY HICKENLOOPER AMENDEMENT (I.E.
CLOSE-DOWN OF ALL AID OPERATIONS) WOULD PROBABLY PRECIPI-
TATE A DEEP CRISIS WITH BENIN, POSSIBLY EVEN
A BREAK IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AT BENIN'S INITIATIVE. END COMMENT.

13. RECAPITULATION OF ACTIONS RECOMMENDED.

A. THAT THE EMBASSY BE INSTRUCTED SOONEST (SAY BY
OPENING OF BUSINESS HERE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6) WHETHER TO
CONFIRM BY NOTE THAT PENDING COMPLETION OF REVIEW, USG
ACTIVITY ON COTONOU BRIDGE/DAM IS SUSPENDED.

B. THAT A SENIOR A.I.D. OFFICIAL BE SENT TO COTONOU
SOON TO JOIN ME IN TALKING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER.

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C. THAT SANDERS AND THOMAS BE GIVEN MONEY TO RESUME
ENGINEER CONSULTANT ACTIVITY IN SUPPORT OF AFDB
PORTION OF BRIDGE/DAM.

D. THAT DEPARTMENT CALL IN BENIN'S NEW AMBASSADOR
FOR FRANK TALK.
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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EO Systematic Review
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